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State officials file lawsuit against Litton for seepage

Could Use Missouri Flow

season in many dry to moderately dry years, he said.

The farthest along of the diversion projects is South Dakota's plan to sell river water for use in a 1,400-mile-long coal slurry pipeline. Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and a coalition of farm, environmental and rail interests have filed federal lawsuits in an effort to stop the sale to the San Francisco-based Energy Transportation Systems, Inc.

The biggest diversion projects would provide irrigation water for farming in the high plains. In those areas, heavy irrigation is depleting the Ogallala Aquifer, an underground lake beneath western Kansas and parts of Texas, Oklahoma, Nebraska and four other states.

Rotert said the corps was studying a proposal to divert 1.4 million to 3.4 million acre-feet per year from the Missouri near St. Joseph, Mo., to western Kansas. He said the system of canals and pumps would cost \$7 billion to \$10 billion, or up to \$500 for each acre irrigated.

From Our Staff and Wire Services

JEFFERSON CITY — State officials filed a lawsuit Friday against Litton Systems Inc. in Springfield, charging the company violated state laws by improperly operating a sewage lagoon for toxic wastes.

The suit, filed in Greene County Circuit Court, said Litton's failure to operate its lagoon in compliance with state law had created a possible health hazard because toxic wastes had seeped from the lagoon.

So far, however, there has been no evidence to show the toxic wastes contaminated water supplies in the area, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources said.

Litton recently closed the lagoon under orders from the state, the department said.

Ronald Enos, general manager for the Springfield Litton plant, would not comment on the suit Friday night because he said he had not seen it.

He said, however, that he did not understand why the suit was filed.

"I thought the problem had been taken care of," Enos said. "I don't understand what's going on."

The suit, filed by Attorney General John Ashcroft on behalf of the DNR, seeks \$10,000-a-day penalties from the firm for an unspecified period of time.

According to the suit, local officials in March discovered some of the toxic wastes in the lagoon had seeped through the lagoon's walls. The wastes included heavy metals, detergents and ammonia used in the company's electroplating process, officials said.

The build-up at the time was so severe that DNR officials declared the lagoon an emergency.

"The land around the lagoon is such that it is possible any release of hazardous wastes from the lagoon could find its way into the under-

ground water system and thereby present a threat to human health and the environment," Ashcroft said.

However, a spokesman for the natural resources agency, Nancy Guyton, said tests of groundwater taken after the seepage was discovered had turned up no contamination which could be traced to Litton.

In September, Litton spent more than \$250,000 in a state-ordered clean-up operation at the lagoon on West Kearney. More than 100 coal trucks carried 2,000 cubic yards of sludge to a chemical waste dump in Joliet, Ill.

The suit filed Friday was the second the state has filed against the firm in the past two years.

In July 1980, Ashcroft filed a suit against Litton alleging it had been discharging wastewater from its lagoon into nearby sinkholes.

The company later was ordered to pay a \$20,000 civil fine.